

Date: October 16, 2018

To: Authorized Representatives of School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

From: Julie Cox, RDN, CD
Assistant Director-School Nutrition Team

Subject: **Announcing:** Application Now Available for the 2018 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant for School Food Authorities from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The School Nutrition Team is pleased to announce that Wisconsin has received \$405,439 from the USDA to award Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Equipment Assistance Grants. This opportunity is provided by the FY18 Consolidated Appropriations Act and is open to SFAs participating in the NSLP. Funds will be distributed through a competitive grant process.

Eligibility

Public school districts are eligible to apply if they participate in the NSLP. SFAs that are private schools or Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI) can apply if participating in NSLP. **Priority will be given to high need schools where at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and have not previously received an equipment grant.**

Equipment

For the purposes of this grant:

- Equipment is defined as an article of tangible, nonexpendable personal property with a useful life of more than one year.
- Equipment unit cost must be equal to or greater than the value that your local school board has set for its capitalization threshold or \$5,000, whichever is lower.
- **Congress has specified for the 2018 Equipment Grant that the threshold for the purchase of each piece of equipment cannot be lower than \$1,000.** Therefore, items like school lunch trays, knives, and utensils will not be approved as it is unlikely that these would fit your SFA's definition of pieces of capital equipment and exceed the \$1,000 minimum.
- The pieces of equipment requested must primarily be used in the NSLP. However, they may also be used in the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- If the equipment is used for other school or non-school events, the grant award will be prorated based on the usage.

Funding

Each SFA may request up to two pieces of equipment. As a special provision, a SFA with over 40,000 students may request up to four pieces of equipment. Below are other funding guidelines:

- Equipment may be requested for more than one school within the same SFA.
- A centralized kitchen which services multiple schools may request equipment. However, centralized kitchens that service schools that already have received a previous USDA or ARRA equipment grant will have a lower priority.
- A school may request to buy a piece of equipment in part with their own funding. If other funding is available, include this information in the narrative section of the application.
- Repair cost, including parts and labor for capital equipment is allowed under this grant.
- When acquiring replacement equipment, the SFA may use the equipment to be replaced as a trade-in or sell the property and use the proceeds to offset the cost of the replacement property.
- SFAs will receive funds for equipment as a reimbursement through the use of the PI-1086 claim form accompanied by a copy of the paid invoice.

Key Areas of Focus

Your narrative **must** address how your equipment purchase will enable you to meet one or more of these key areas:

- Equipment that lends itself to improving the quality and nutritional content of school food service meals (e.g., replacing fryers with combination steamer-ovens).
- Equipment that assists in improving participation by meeting Smarter Lunchroom goals (e.g., lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices, redesigning menus that target healthier entrees/options).
- Equipment that improves the safety of food served in the school meal programs (e.g., cold/hot holding equipment, dishwashing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, blast chillers).
- Equipment that allows schools to support expanded participation in a school meal program (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space).
- Equipment that improves the overall energy efficiency of the school food service operations (e.g., purchase of an energy-efficient Energy Star rated walk-in freezer replacing an outdated, energy-demanding freezer).
- Equipment that enables Wisconsin schools to use locally grown foods (e.g., additional refrigeration units, two-compartment produce washing sinks, serving line equipment/salad bars, mechanical potato peelers, mechanical vegetable slicer/choppers).

Best Practices

- School officials and local policymakers should work collaboratively with parents, teachers, students, and funders to identify and implement strategies for meeting equipment, infrastructure, and training needs.
- Nonprofit and for-profit organizations that have an interest in improving children's health, education, school infrastructure, and community wellness should provide assistance to schools in acquiring the necessary equipment.

Procurement

Equipment purchases must follow all federal, state, and local procurement laws. Keep in mind:

- As with all Federal grant funds, procurement regulations at 7 CFR Part 210.21 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326 applies, and equipment competitively procured using these grant funds must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable.
- Sealed Bids or Competitive Proposal procedures are not required unless the equipment purchase is valued over \$250,000. For equipment purchases valued under \$250,000, [Small Purchase](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/procurement-by-small-purchase-procedures.pdf) procedures are required (three bids and buy). (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/procurement-by-small-purchase-procedures.pdf>).
- Equipment with a value less than \$10,000 may be acquired using [Micro-Purchase](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/procurement-by-micro-purchase.pdf) procedures (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/procurement-by-micro-purchase.pdf>).
- When using the small purchase procedure, the three bids should be from three different vendors **and at least one of them should be from a non-Internet source.**
- Bids and specifications are required to be submitted with application. **Applications will not be considered without specifications and bids.**
- A specification is a list of the features you are requesting in a piece of equipment. It is NOT a manufacturer's product sheet that lists all of the options available. For assistance in writing equipment specifications refer to the SNT Equipment Grant resource webpage for the Summary – Writing Specifications for Food Service Equipment (<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities/equipment-grant/advice-to-grant-writers>).
- Obligations to purchase made prior to a grant award are ineligible for funding.
- Bids are generally only valid for a specified length of time. **Part of the specification should ask that bids be valid for six months.**
- Grant recipients are expected to fully expend grant funds within three months of the issued grant award.
- **Federal regulations prohibit the selections of vendors based solely on the basis that they are local vendors.** Refer to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.319 (7b).

Application

The grant applications and instructions are posted on the [SNT Equipment Grant](http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities/equipment-grant) webpage (<http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities/equipment-grant>). Download the application to your computer and print the application instructions. **Please read the application instructions carefully as each situation is different, and the instructions will assist you in successfully applying for this grant.**

Fill out the application electronically and save it to your computer. Email your complete application, signature form, the equipment specifications, and the three bids for each equipment request to: lauren.troxte1@dpi.wi.gov.

Applications must be electronically submitted by December 21, 2018. Applications sent after that date may not be considered for funding. Retain a copy of the application for your files.

Awards

If selected to receive an equipment grant, a Notification of Federal Grant Subaward letter will be sent via e-mail to your school/district in late spring. Once notified, you will need to complete your procurement and expenditure activities within three months of award.

If you do not anticipate being able to purchase a piece of equipment within this timeframe, you may want to consider requesting funding for a different piece of equipment.

Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Application is complete including specification and documentation of three (3) bids for each piece of equipment requested.
- Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals is 50 percent or greater.
- Previous Equipment Assistance Grant awards—priority will be given to **sites that did not** receive funds from the 2009 ARRA grants, the FY 2010, FY 2014, FY 2015, FY 2016, Agricultural Appropriations Acts or the FY2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act.
- Costs appear reasonable.
- Equipment supports expanded participation in NSLP and SBP.
- Age of current food service equipment or lack of appropriate equipment.
- Equipment improves the nutritional quality of meals.
- Equipment enhances the Smarter Lunchroom Program (e.g., lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices).
- Equipment improves safety of food served.
- Equipment improves overall energy efficiency.
- Equipment enables use of local foods.
- Limitations to other funding resources.
- Geographic distribution throughout the state.
- Average Daily Participation.

Reporting

The State Agency is required to submit quarterly reports and an annual progress report to USDA based on the following criteria.

- Progress/Challenges made in solicitation, obligation and expenditure of funds by the State agency;
- Progress/Challenges experienced by the SFA/LEA in expenditure of funds;
- Number of Equipment Assistance Grant applicants and number approved;
- Report on the total amount and percentage of administrative costs expended as compared to the total amount allowable for administrative costs.
- School name and free/reduced priced rate (Annually)
- Total award amount (Annually)
- The type and cost of each piece of equipment funded (Annually)

For More Information

Please refer to the [SNT Equipment Grant webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information, including USDA guidance memos, School Nutrition Team Memorandums, resources to assist you in deciding which pieces of equipment to purchase, and assistance in writing the equipment specifications (<http://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/grants-opportunities/equipment-grant>.)

Questions regarding this funding opportunity can be directed to Lauren Troxtel at Lauren.troxtel@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 266-5514.

SFAs that are awarded a FY 2018 Equipment Assistance Grant must comply with the following regulations, principals, and assurances:

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and System for Award Management”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA Implementing regulations “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418: USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 USC Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”
- Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417
- Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55)
- “The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), dated September 26, 2006”

Cost Principals

- 2 CFR, Part 200: Subpart E, Cost Principles

USDA Regulations

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

Assurance of Civil Rights Compliance

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d- et seq.), USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15, Nondiscrimination, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 42, Nondiscrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity: Policies and Procedures
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting

from Federal Financial Assistance, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 41, Implementation of Executive Order 12250, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap In Federally Assisted Programs

- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) The Grantee assures that it will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate the requirements in these laws, regulations, and directives. The Grantee gives this assurance in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining the funds provided under this agreement.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III). (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213)

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

fax: (202) 690-7442; or

email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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